



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

**Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
for**

Rose Creek Hatchery Building Construction, Riverside Road, Bigfork, MT

August 31, 2010

Description of Proposed Action

Type of proposed state action: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to construct a new 40' x 60' steel building at the Rose Creek Hatchery in order to expand the fish culturing capacity of the site. In addition to the proposed building, FWP plans to gravel forty feet of driveway from existing on-property road and trench 200 feet of underground power to building.

Background

Montana's cool and cold water hatchery system is currently at or in excess of reasonable rearing capacity. The Rose Creek property was purchased over 35 years ago with the objective of developing the site for a hatchery to supplement existing statewide hatchery production, primarily kokanee, westslope cutthroat trout, and Arctic grayling.

The limited rearing facilities that exist at Rose Creek have seen minor improvements in the past 4 years under the direction of Flathead Lake Salmon Hatchery (FLSH), which is located near Somers on Flathead Lake. The Rose Creek facility is rudimentary and experimental in nature, with limited utility. The proposed project would double the rearing capacity of FLSH, reducing fish densities substantially to a less precarious level. This would improve fish health and increase survival upon release. When operational, the Rose Creek Hatchery will have the capacity of 1.5 million 2-inch kokanee or 750,000 2-inch westslope cutthroat trout.

Existing FWP hatcheries can no longer accommodate the growing demands for stocking programs. Additional rearing space is required to meet the growing demand for more native fish, larger fish that can escape predation of nonnative warm water species, and to meet increasing public demand to maintain our popular sport fisheries. These issues necessitate the development of a hatchery at Rose Creek.

Benefits from this project will include:

- Rearing space necessary to propagate native species for restoration efforts in their native ranges across Montana.
- Rearing space for cool and cold water sport fishes to maintain recreational fisheries.
- Providing propagation and fish stocking to local waters instead of having to bring fish from distant hatcheries.

Alternatives

Alternative A: Proposed Action

FWP proposed to construct a 40' x 60' steel building to augment and replace some of the diminishing fish production capability at the Flathead Lake Salmon Hatchery due to a decreasing water quantity and quality. Additionally, the new facility will better utilize FWP existing water rights at the site.

The proposed new building is designed to accommodate sixteen 3' x 16' raceways, with a trench drain through the length of the space for spillage and maintenance needs.

Anticipated cost of the project is \$148,000, which will be funded by 96% state license dollars and 4% Federal Sport Fish Restoration dollars.

The Rose Creek Hatchery will be maintained with funding through a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sportfish restoration grant and statewide Fish Hatchery Operation and Maintenance funds, and will be managed by the staff at Flathead Lake Salmon Hatchery.

Alternative B: No Action

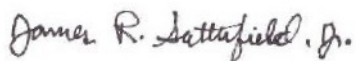
The hatchery is not built, and the site remains in a minimally developed state. Montana's needs for fish hatchery fish for sport fishing and restoration programs may be unmet, particularly for native fish. Another issue to consider under this alternative is that if FWP does not fully utilize water rights at this site for beneficial use by 2011, FWP will lose said rights. This site is proposed in adjunct with the Flathead Lake Salmon Hatchery, which is not meeting fisheries demands for hatchery fish due to diminishing water quantity and increasing requests for hatchery fish.

Public Comment

Public comment was solicited between August 10 and August 24, 2010. Six comments were received, and all were in favor of the proposed action, but with concerns voiced in regard to possible flooding of neighboring fields and building color.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Based on analysis in the EA, I find Alternative A to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies, and have determined that this action will not have a significant impact on the human or physical environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The final EA may be viewed at or obtained from Montana, Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901.



James R. Satterfield, Jr., Ph.D.
Regional Supervisor

August 31, 2010
Date